

VZCZCXRO1069
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHPW RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHEK #1034 2820949
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 080949Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1430
INFO RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2989
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHPNH/NVC PORTSMOUTH NH
RUEHFT/AMCONSUL FRANKFURT 3803

UNCLAS BISHKEK 001034

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP: EHOLMES, CA/VO/F/P: MEARL, DS/CR/VG
DEPT PASS TO KCC
POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS
FRANKFURT FOR RCO RON PACKOWITZ
MOSCOW FOR USCIS SUZANNE SINCLAIR SMITH

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KFRD](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [CMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: CENTRAL ASIA'S FIRST REGIONAL FRAUD CONFERENCE

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 1-2, 2008, Embassy Bishkek hosted the first Central Asian regional anti-fraud conference at Lake Issyk Kul. With fourteen participants from posts in Central Asia and representatives from USCIS Moscow, the conference was a great success as it highlighted the commonalities of Central Asian consular fraud trends while educating participants on country-specific threats to watch. By holding the meeting outside of Bishkek, posts were able to gain useful knowledge and build regional connections while minimizing the fiscal impact on individual budgets. Posts in the region hope that despite these times of budgetary constraints, modest conferences like this one will continue in the future as they provide invaluable information sharing and discussion. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Posts in Central Asia, such as Almaty, Ashgabat, Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Tashkent, have long enjoyed collaborative working relationships with each other. Thanks to tools such as e-mail and Microsoft Office Communicator, officers are able to ask quick questions while on the line and seek guidance from each other. This cooperation is vital considering the porous borders of the region and the various pockets of ethnic groups (Tajiks in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Uzbeks in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan for example) that are the legacy of the mapmaking skills and forced ethnic divisions of the former Soviet Union. Almaty in particular faces trials as it adjudicates the immigrant and diversity visas of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In addition, three of the five Central Asian Embassies are one-officer consular posts. While annual gatherings such as the Moscow Consular Conference have been useful in the past, it is sometimes difficult for all Central Asian posts to attend. As the economies and governments of Russia, Ukraine, and the nations of the Caucasus have evolved over the last five years, Central Asia sees fewer and fewer consular commonalities with their former Soviet compatriots. The problems and issues seen by Moscow and Kyiv are not the same issues facing Central Asia.

3. (SBU) Posts in the region have long talked of attempting to hold their own conference. In September 2008, the CA/FPP officer who covers the region received funding to visit all five Central Asian posts. In conjunction with her visit, Bishkek proposed to host the first ever Central Asian Anti-Fraud Conference. Kyrgyzstan volunteered to host for a variety of reasons - mainly due to the visa-free travel of diplomatic passport holders and the low costs of holding a conference outside of Bishkek. By staying at a hotel in Lake Issyk Kul in the off season, per diem was a mere \$74 a day for participants. This allowed each post to send not only one or more FSO's but also send Locally Employed Staff. Bishkek invited USCIS Moscow, who covers the region, and the Regional Consular Officer in Frankfurt. Almaty, Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Tashkent sent representatives. Unfortunately due to scheduling problems, Ashgabat was unable to attend.

14. (SBU) During the two-day conference, each post participated in round tables and presentations on topics such as Summer Work and Travel Fraud, IV/DV fraud, petition-based visa fraud and adoption fraud. The representative from USCIS Moscow not only shared her overview of the region and refugee processing; but also shared her extensive previous experience in dealing with petition fraud from the USCIS point of view. Exchanges such as these not only helped USCIS gain a better understanding of issues in the region but gave FSO's better tools in effectively pursuing petition revocations. The adoption fraud panel was chaired by Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Both of these countries are facing runaway increases in the number of adoptions with little local government oversight.

15. (SBU) Comment: Despite the use of modern technology in consular work, nothing replaces face-to-face interaction. While DVC's are useful for short meetings, they are not conducive to a lively discussion of ten or more people about intricate topics such as the minutia of an I-604 investigation. It is hard to connect to another person when there are sound delays and interrupted video feed. By involving Locally Employed Staff in this conference, posts were able to build regional links that will hopefully last long after FSO's have departed from post. Bishkek believes that modest and well-organized conferences such as the one it hosted can have lasting dividends while placing little strain on limited resources. End Comment.

Gfoeller